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(54) **VITAL SIGN MEASUREMENT ROBOT AND CONTROL METHOD THEREOF**

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600/544
See application file for complete search history.

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **A61B 5/4887** (2013.01); **A61B 5/04** (2013.01); **A61B 5/6835** (2013.01); **A61B 5/6843** (2013.01); **A61B 5/6844** (2013.01); **A61B 5/6887** (2013.01)

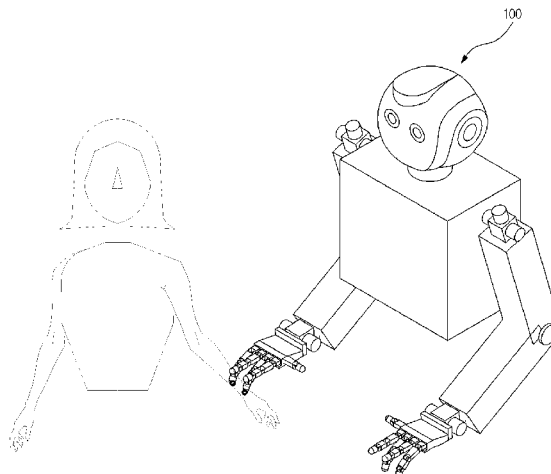
(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC A61B 5/04; A61B 5/0402; A61B 5/0408; A61B 5/04085; A61B 5/0478; A61B 5/0492; A61B 5/053; A61B 5/0531; A61B 5/0533; A61B 5/4869; A61B 5/6835; A61B 5/6843; A61B 5/6844; A61B 2560/0462; A61B 2560/0468; A61B 2562/16

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A vital sign measurement robot which automatically measures vital signs, and a control method thereof. The vital sign measurement robot includes an input unit to receive vital sign measurement instructions, an image recognition unit to detect a distance between the robot and a person, vital signs of whom are to be measured, and a measurement portion of the body of the person, when the vital sign measurement instructions are received, a control unit to move electrodes provided on hands so as to locate the electrodes at the measurement portion of the body of the person, when the distance between the robot and the person and the measurement portion of the body of the person are detected, and a vital sign measurement unit to measure a vital sign, when the electrodes are located at the measurement portion of the body of the person.

7 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



US 9,101,324 B2

Page 2

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FIG. 1

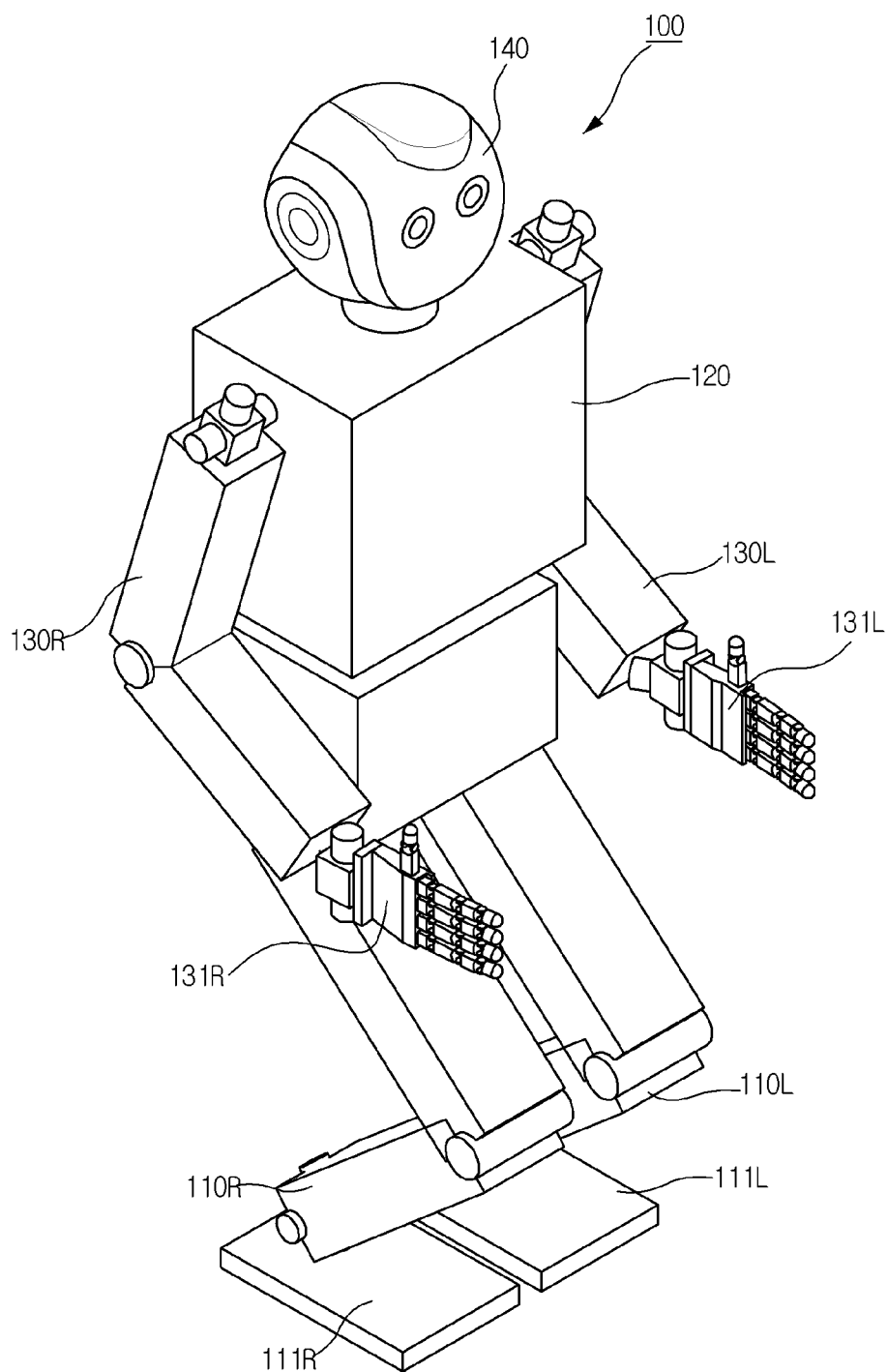


FIG. 2

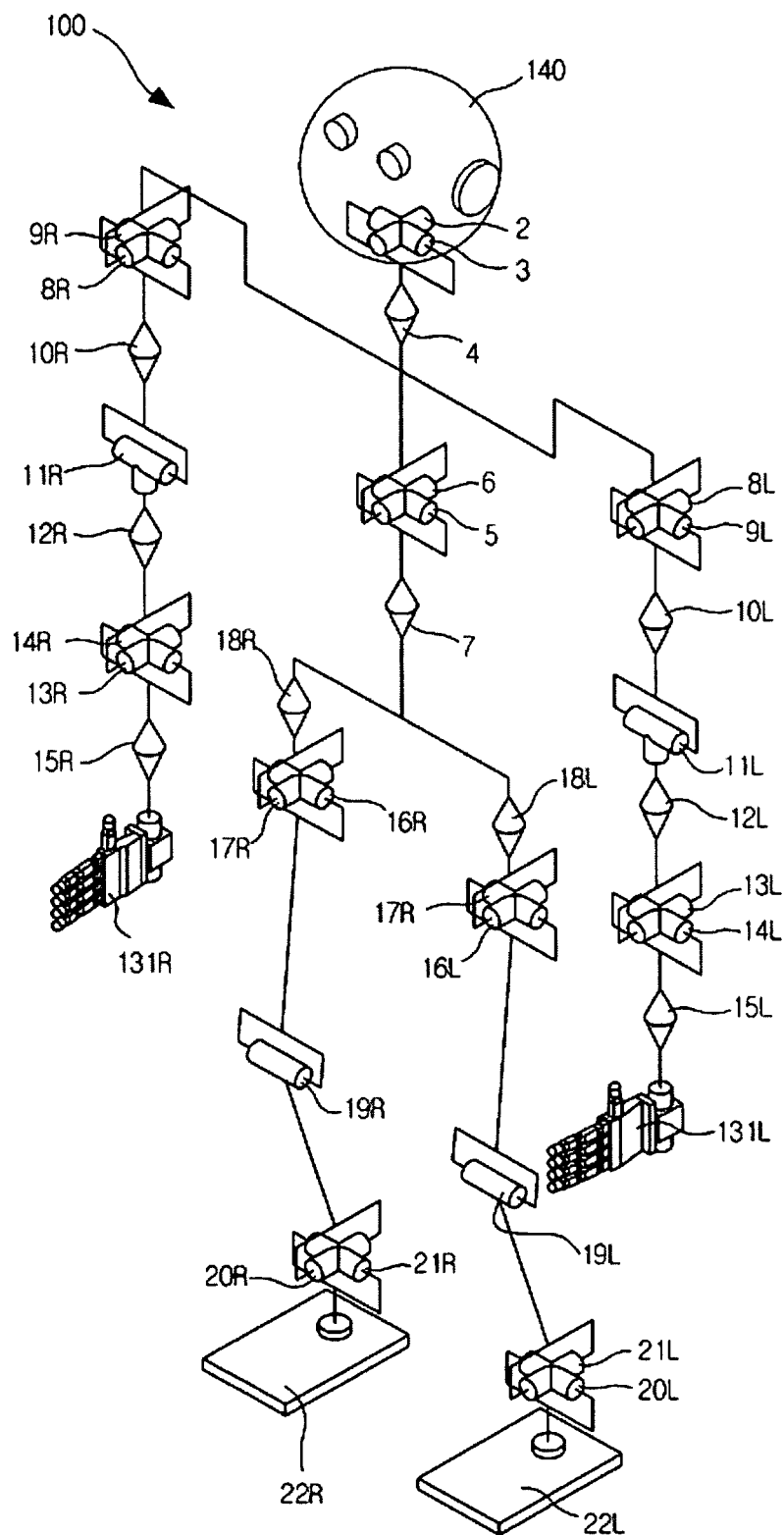


FIG. 3

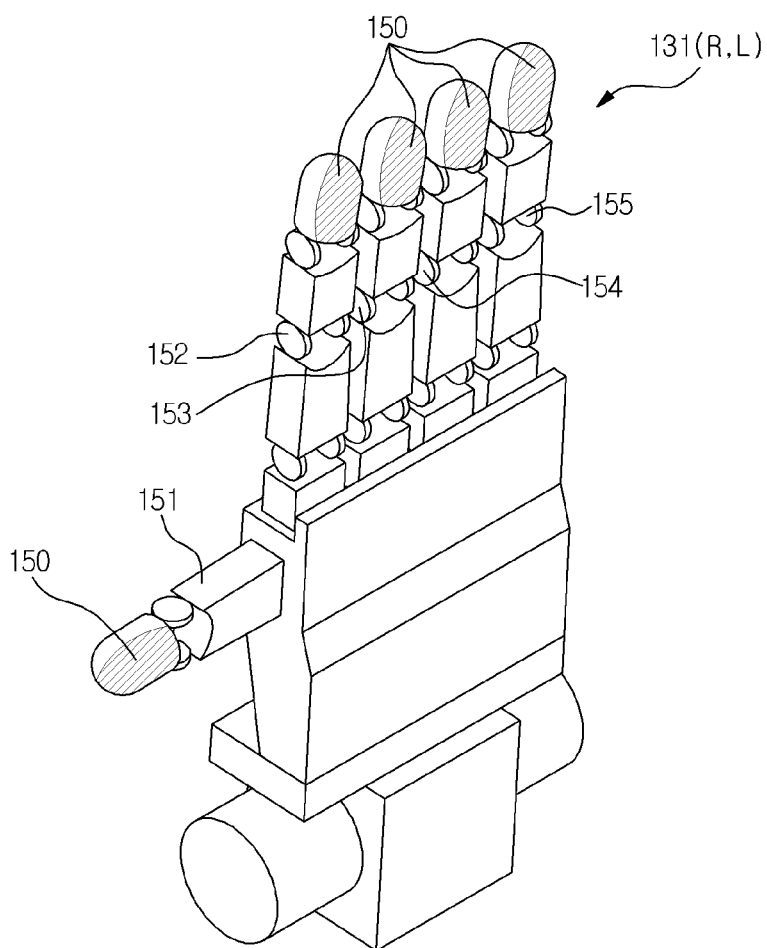


FIG. 4

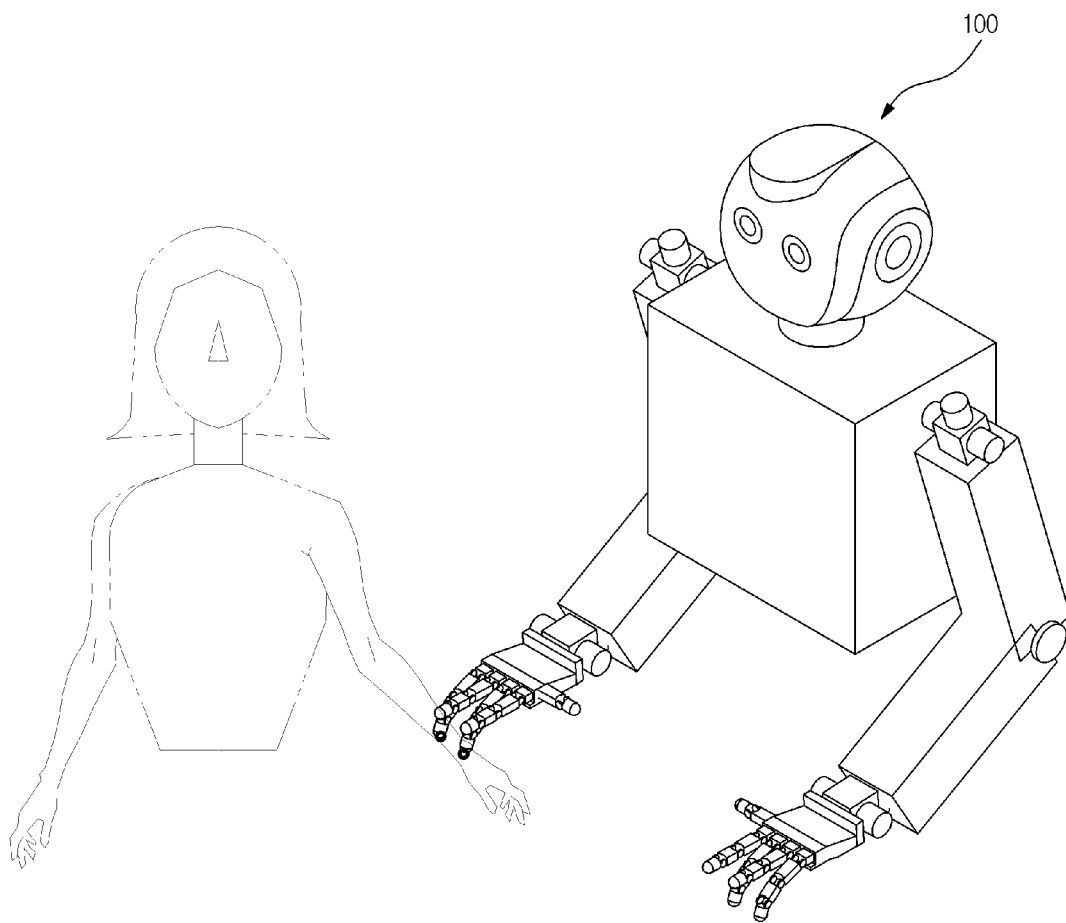


FIG. 5

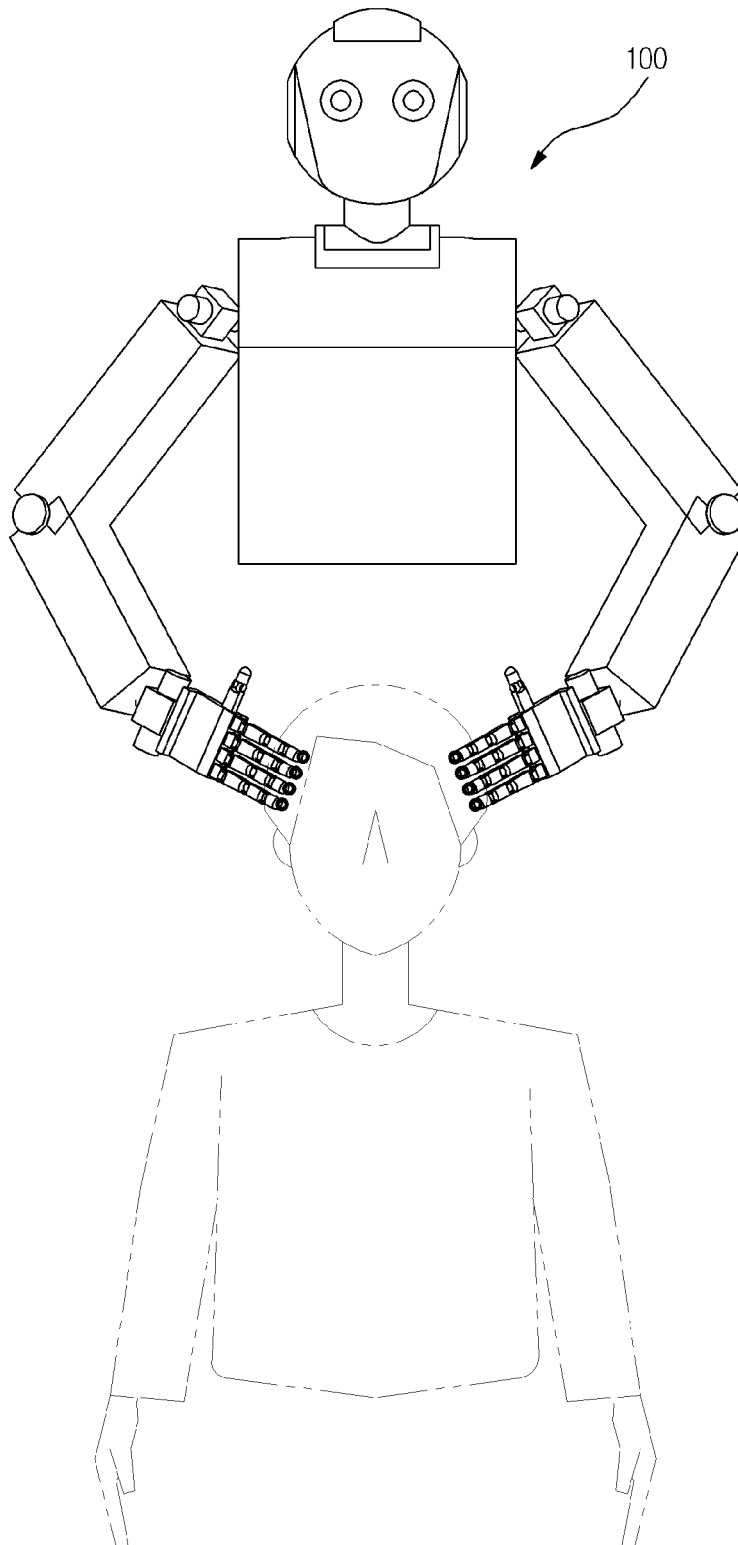


FIG. 6

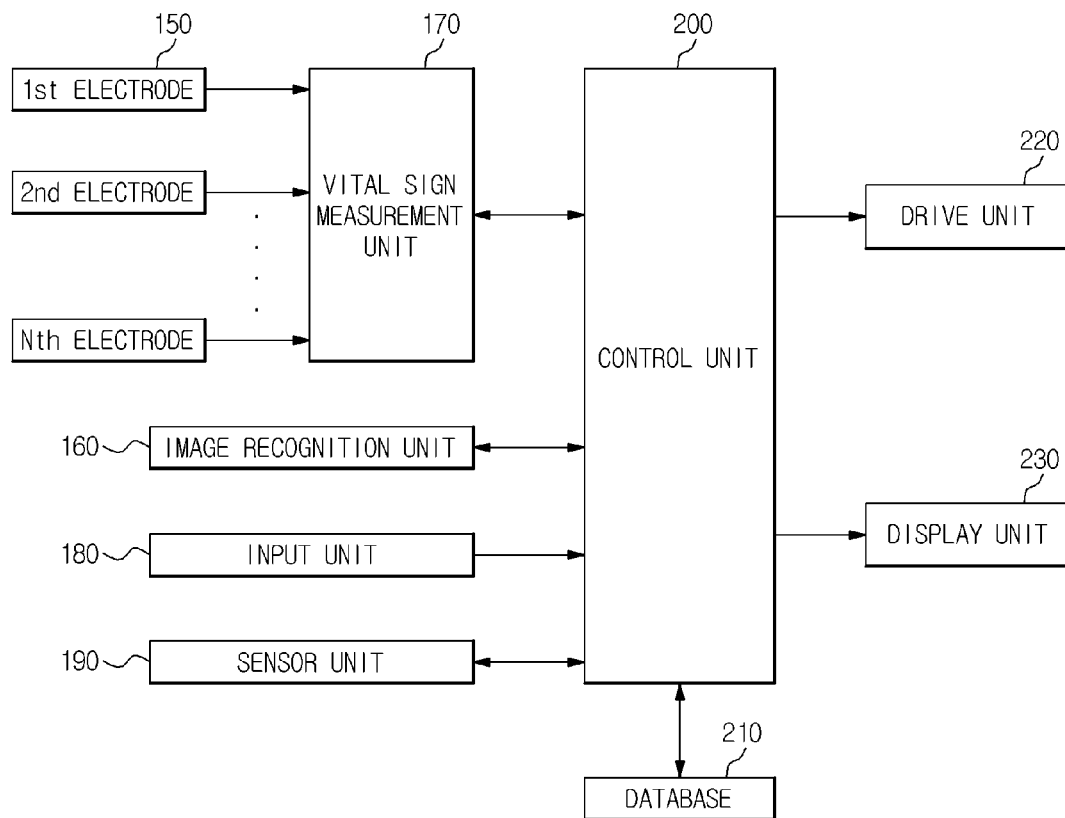


FIG. 7

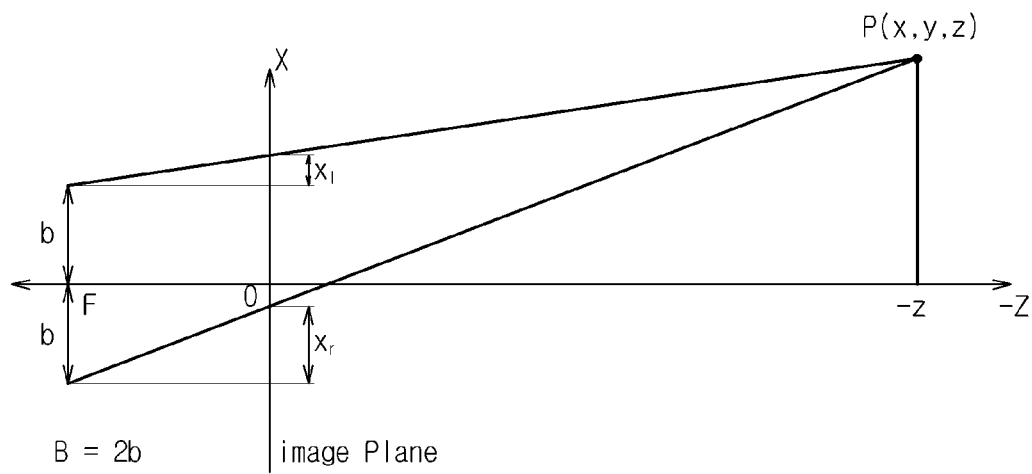


FIG. 8

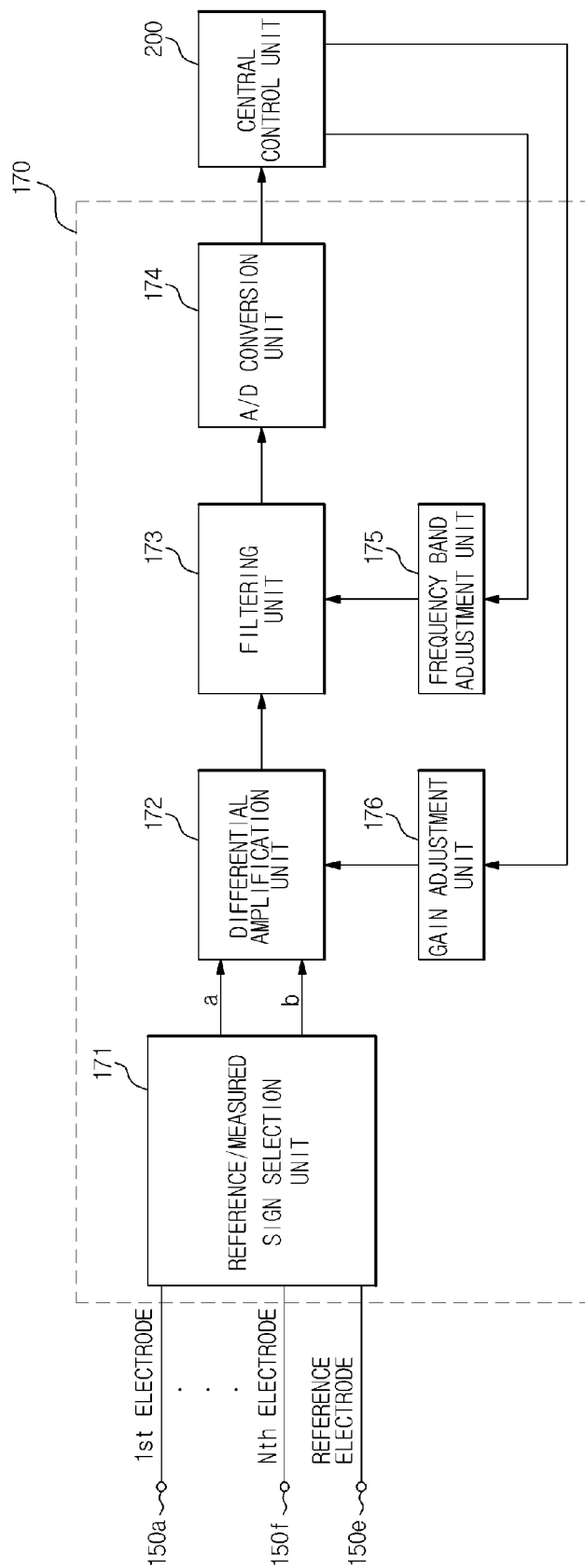
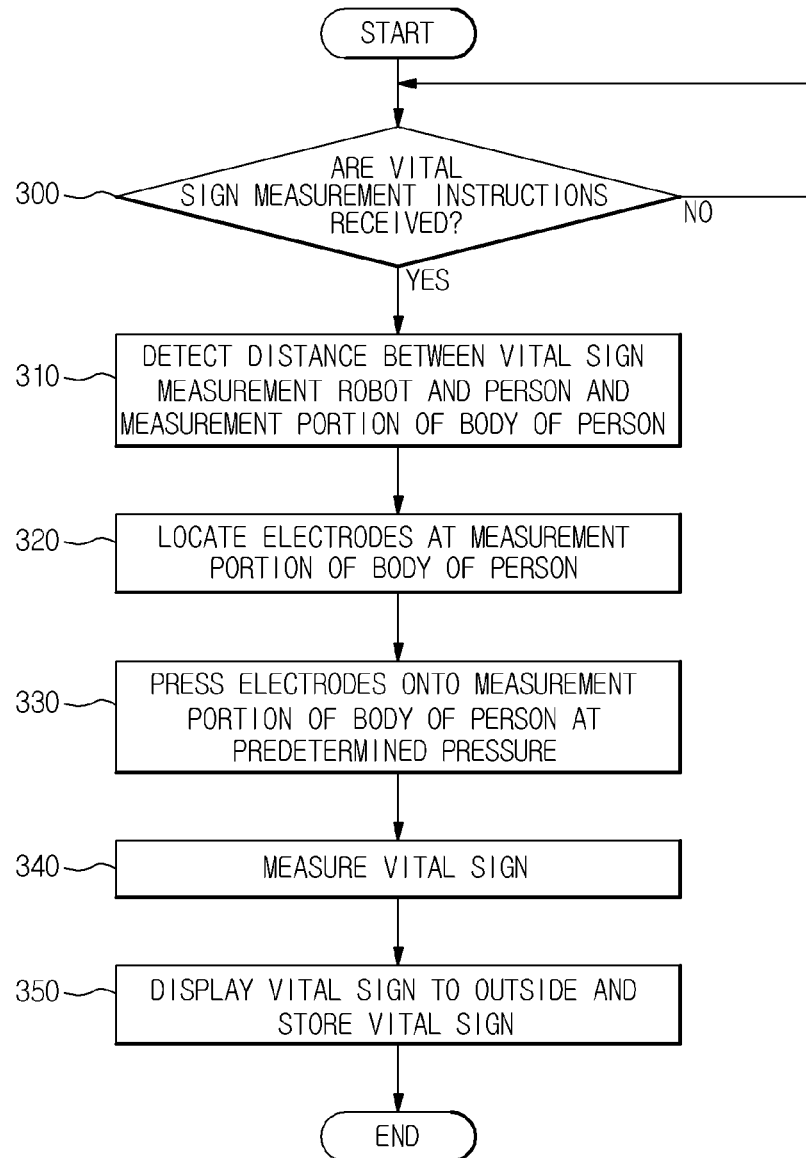


FIG. 9



1

VITAL SIGN MEASUREMENT ROBOT AND CONTROL METHOD THEREOF

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit of Korean Patent Application No. 2010-0123003, filed on Dec. 3, 2010 in the Korean Intellectual Property Office, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

1. Field

Embodiments relate to a vital sign measurement robot which measures vital signs, and a control method thereof.

2. Description of the Related Art

Recently, research and development of intelligent robots which recognize circumstances and achieve autonomous judgment has progressed. Intelligent robots include industrial robots, home service robots, rehabilitation robots, elder assisting robots and construction robots. Application of intelligent robots is being expanded to medicine and biotechnology.

As medical environments change from a supplier-leading type to a customer-leading type, remote medical treatment is increasingly employed. Remote medical treatment has developed into a ubiquitous health care system in which a patient's health is monitored and checked anywhere and anytime through rapid development and supply of telecommunication technology.

In the ubiquitous health care system, it is important for vital signs to be monitored and checked without causing inconvenience to a wearer. In a conventional vital sign measurement method, in order to measure vital signs, electrodes need to be attached to a body of a patient either by a nurse or by the patient, thereby causing inconvenience.

SUMMARY

Therefore, it is an aspect of an embodiment to provide a vital sign measurement robot which automatically measures vital signs, and a control method thereof.

Additional aspects of embodiments will be set forth in part in the description which follows and, in part, will be obvious from the description, or may be learned by practice of the embodiments.

In accordance with an aspect of an embodiment, a vital sign measurement robot includes an input unit to receive vital sign measurement instructions, an image recognition unit to detect a distance between the vital sign measurement robot and a person, vital signs of whom are to be measured, and a measurement portion of the body of the person, when the vital sign measurement instructions are received, a control unit to move electrodes provided on hands so as to locate the electrodes at the measurement portion of the body of the person, when the distance between the vital sign measurement robot and the person, the vital signs of whom are to be measured, and the measurement portion of the body of the person are detected, and a vital sign measurement unit to measure a vital sign, when the electrodes are located at the measurement portion of the body of the person.

At least one hand may be provided, and at least one finger may be provided at each of the at least one hand such that each of the electrodes is attached to each of the at least one finger.

The vital sign measurement robot may further include a database to store measurement portions of the bodies of per-

2

sons, vital signs of whom are to be measured, according to types of the vital signs, and the image recognition unit may sense a three-dimensional image of the person and sense the measurement portion of the body of the person from the three-dimensional image of the person.

The vital sign measurement robot may further include a pressure sensor to measure pressure applied by the electrodes to the measurement portion of the body of the person, and when the electrodes provided on the hands are located at the measurement portion of the body of the person, the control unit may control the electrodes so as to be pressed onto the measurement portion of the body of the person at a predetermined pressure according to data transferred from the pressure sensor.

When the electrodes provided on the hands are located at the measurement portion of the body of the person, the control unit may control the electrodes so as to be pressed onto the measurement portion of the body of the person at a predetermined pressure through impedance control.

The vital sign measurement robot may further include a tachometer to measure absolute positions of respective joints of the vital sign measurement robot, and the tachometer may sense joint angles of the joints and transfers the joint angles to the control unit and the control unit may calculate absolute coordinates of the respective joints from the joint angles.

The vital sign measurement robot may further include a display unit to display data regarding the vital sign, and when the control unit receives the data regarding the vital sign from the vital sign measurement unit, the control unit may output the data regarding the vital sign through the display unit.

In accordance with another aspect of an embodiment, a control method of a vital sign measurement robot includes detecting a distance between the vital sign measurement robot and a person, vital signs of whom are to be measured, and a measurement portion of the body of the person, when vital sign measurement instructions are received, moving electrodes provided on hands according to data regarding the distance between the vital sign measurement robot and the person, the vital signs of whom are to be measured, and the measurement portion of the body of the person, so as to locate the electrodes at the measurement portion of the body of the person, pressing the electrodes onto the measurement portion of the body of the person at a predetermined pressure, and measuring a vital sign received through the electrodes.

The pressing of the electrodes onto the measurement portion of the body of the person at the predetermined pressure may be achieved by measuring pressure applied by the electrodes to the measurement portion of the body of the person using a pressure sensor and then controlling the pressure.

The pressing of the electrodes onto the measurement portion of the body of the person at the predetermined pressure may be achieved by controlling pressure applied by the electrodes to the measurement portion of the body of the person through impedance control.

The detecting of the measurement portion of the body of the person may be achieved by recognizing a three-dimensional shape of the person and then selecting one of data stored in advance corresponding to the three-dimensional shape of the person.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and/or other aspects of embodiments will become apparent and more readily appreciated from the following description of the embodiments, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings of which:

3

FIG. 1 is a perspective view illustrating the external appearance of a vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 2 is a view illustrating structures of main joints of the vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 3 is a view illustrating attachment of electrodes for vital sign measurement to a hand of the vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 4 is a view illustrating measurement of an electromyogram (EMG) measured by the vital sign measurement robot;

FIG. 5 is a view illustrating an electroencephalogram (EEG) measured by the vital sign measurement robot;

FIG. 6 is a control block diagram of the vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 7 is a graph illustrating the principle of a stereo vision system of the vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 8 is a detailed block diagram of a vital sign measurement unit of the vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment; and

FIG. 9 is a flow chart illustrating a control method of a vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Reference will now be made in detail to embodiments, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings, wherein like reference numerals refer to like elements throughout.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view illustrating the external appearance of a vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment.

A vital sign measurement robot **100** in accordance with an embodiment may be any one of various robots, such as a walking robot and a wheel type robot. Hereinafter, a walking robot will be exemplarily described.

The vital sign measurement robot **100** is a bipedal walking robot which walks upright using two legs **110R** and **110L** in the same manner as a human. The vital sign measurement robot **100** includes a torso **120**, two arms **130R** and **130L** and a head **140** provided at the upper portion of the torso **120**, the two legs **110R** and **110L** provided at the lower portion of the torso **120**, hands **131R** and **131L** respectively provided at the ends of the two arms **130R** and **130L**, and feet **111R** and **111L** respectively provided at the ends of the two legs **110R** and **110L**.

Here, 'R' and 'L' represent right and left sides of the vital sign measurement robot **100**, respectively, 'COG (Center of Gravity)' represents a position of the center of gravity of the vital sign measurement robot **100**, and 'ZMP' represents a point at which the sum total of a moment in the roll direction (i.e., in the x-axis direction denoting a direction of walking of the vital sign measurement robot) and a moment in the pitch direction (i.e., in the y-axis direction denoting a direction of strides of the vital sign measurement robot) on a contact surface with the ground becomes zero.

FIG. 2 is a view illustrating structures of main joints of the vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment.

A neck joint unit to support the head **140** includes a rotary joint **2** in the roll direction, a rotary joint **3** in the pitch direction, and a rotary joint **4** in the yaw direction, thereby being rotated in the x-axis direction (in the roll direction), in the y-axis direction (in the pitch direction), and in the z-axis direction (in the yaw direction). The two arms **130R** and **130L**

4

respectively include shoulder joint units, elbow joint units and wrist joint units so that parts of the vital sign measurement robot **100** corresponding to shoulders, elbows and wrists are rotatable.

The shoulder joint units of the two arms **130R** and **130L** respectively include rotary joints **8R** and **8L** in the roll direction, rotary joints **9R** and **9L** in the pitch direction, and rotary joints **10R** and **10L** in the yaw direction, thereby being rotatable in the x-axis direction (in the roll direction), in the y-axis direction (in the pitch direction), and in the z-axis direction (in the yaw direction).

The elbow joint units of the two arms **130R** and **130L** respectively include rotary joints **11R** and **11L** in the pitch direction and rotary joints **12R** and **12L** in the yaw direction, thereby being rotatable in the y-axis direction (in the pitch direction) and in the z-axis direction (in the yaw direction).

The wrist joint units of the two arms **130R** and **130L** respectively include rotary joints **13R** and **13L** in the roll direction, rotary joints **14R** and **14L** in the pitch direction, and rotary joints **15R** and **15L** in the yaw direction, thereby being rotatable in the x-axis direction (in the roll direction), in the y-axis direction (in the pitch direction), and in the z-axis direction (in the yaw direction).

The torso **120** includes a rotary joint **5** in the roll direction, a rotary joint **6** in the pitch direction and a rotary joint **7** in the yaw direction, thereby being rotatable in the x-axis direction (in the roll direction), in the y-axis direction (in the pitch direction), and in the z-axis direction (in the yaw direction).

The two legs **110R** and **110L** respectively include hip joint units, knee joint units and ankle joint units. The hip joint units of the two legs **110R** and **110L** respectively include rotary joints **16R** and **16L** in the roll direction, rotary joints **17R** and **17L** in the pitch direction, and rotary joints **18R** and **18L** in the yaw direction, thereby being rotatable in the x-axis direction (in the roll direction), in the y-axis direction (in the pitch direction), and in the z-axis direction (in the yaw direction). The knee joint units of the two legs **110R** and **110L** respectively include rotary joints **19R** and **19L** in the pitch direction, thereby being rotatable in the y-axis direction (in the pitch direction). The ankle joint units of the two legs **110R** and **110L** respectively include rotary joints **20R** and **20L** in the roll direction and rotary joints **21R** and **21L** in the pitch direction, thereby being rotatable in the x-axis direction (in the roll direction) and in the y-axis direction (in the pitch direction). FIG. 2 also shows feet **22R** and **22L**.

Respective degrees of freedom of the above-described vital sign measurement humanoid robot **100** are substantially achieved using respective actuators. In consideration of requirements, such as similarity to a natural shape of a human by excluding extra expansion in external appearance and pose control of an unstable structure, the actuators may be both small and lightweight.

FIG. 3 is a view illustrating attachment of electrodes for vital sign measurement to the hand of the vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment, FIG. 4 is a view illustrating measurement of an electromyogram (EMG) measured by the vital sign measurement robot, and FIG. 5 is a view illustrating an electroencephalogram (EEG) measured by the vital sign measurement robot. Here, vital signs include all signs generated from a human body, such as an electromyogram (EMG), an electrocardiogram (EKG), an electroencephalogram (EEG) and so on.

One or more fingers **151** to **155** are provided on each of the hands **131R** and **131L** of the vital sign measurement robot **100**. An electrode **150** is provided at the tip of each of the fingers **151** to **155** of the hands **131R** and **131L**. FIG. 3 illustrates that the electrode **150** is attached to the tip of each

of the fingers **151** to **155**. The electrodes **150** may be provided at both hands **131R** and **131L** or be provided at one of the hands **131R** and **131L** of the vital sign measurement robot **100**. With reference to FIG. 4, the vital sign measurement robot **100** uses the plural electrodes **150** of one of the hands **131R** and **131L** during measurement of an EMG. With reference to FIG. 5, the vital sign measurement robot **100** uses the plural electrodes **150** of both hands **131R** and **131L** during measurement of an EEG.

Although the above embodiment exemplarily describes the plural electrodes **150** as being attached to the two hands **131R** and **131L** of the vital sign measurement robot **100**, the number of the hands **131R** and **131L** and the number of the electrodes **150** are not limited as long as electrodes are attached to manipulators provided on the robot **100**.

Hereinafter, a vital sign measurement method of the vital sign measurement robot **100** will be described.

FIG. 6 is a control block diagram of the vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment, FIG. 7 is a graph illustrating the principle of a stereo vision system of the vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment, and FIG. 8 is a detailed block diagram of a vital sign measurement unit of the vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment.

The vital sign measurement robot **100** includes an image recognition unit **160**, a vital sign measurement unit **170**, an input unit **180**, a sensor unit **190**, a control unit **200**, a database **210**, a drive unit **220**, and a display unit **230**.

The image recognition unit **160** detects a distance between the vital sign measurement robot **100** and a person, vital signs of whom are to be measured, and a measurement portion of the body of the person. The image recognition unit **160** includes a device to three-dimensionally measure the person, the vital signs of whom are to be measured, such as a stereo vision system, a laser, or an infrared scanner. A method of three-dimensionally measuring the person using the stereo vision system, the laser, or the infrared scanner is well known. Therefore, by way of example, only operation and function of the stereo vision system will be briefly described.

The stereo vision system includes a plurality of CCD cameras serving as an image input device, and an image processing device to process image data received from the plurality of CCD cameras. The image processing device calculates movement data and stereo image processing data using the received images. The image processing device first calculates motion data based on the images obtained using the plurality of CCD cameras, and then obtains a stereo result using the motion value in stereo calculation.

The stereo vision system to measure the shape of a three-dimensional object generally employs two CCD cameras using the principle of human eyes. Hereinafter, the principle of the stereo vision system will be described with reference to FIG. 7. With reference to FIG. 7, 'F' represents a focal length of a lens, 'b' represents a distance from the central point of the lens to a halfway point ($x=0$) between the left and right CCD cameras, and 'B' represents a distance between the centers of the lenses of the left and right CCD cameras and is referred to as a base line. If an arbitrary point in a space is expressed as $P(x, y, z)$, when the point P is projected on images of the left and right CCD cameras, values X_l and X_r are respectively displayed on left and right image planes and a difference $X_l - X_r$ between the values X_l and X_r is referred to as disparity.

The stereo vision system calculates three-dimensional data of an object. Here, the stereo vision system calculates a distance from the halfway point ($x=0$) between the left and right

CCD cameras to the object, i.e., a value of a Z-axis component of the object, from the disparity value using triangulation, as described below.

$$z = F - (B * F) / d$$

Expression 1

The vital sign measurement unit **170** detects various vital signs through the electrodes **150** contacting the skin of a user. Wet electrodes or dry electrodes may be used as the electrodes **150**. The wet electrodes are disposable electrodes and the dry electrodes are made of a conductive polymer or a metal having high conductivity.

With reference to FIG. 8, the vital sign measurement unit **170** includes a reference/measured sign selection unit **171**, a differential amplification unit **172**, a filtering unit **173**, an A/D conversion unit **174**, a frequency band adjustment unit **175** and a gain adjustment unit **176**.

The reference/measured sign selection unit **171** receives measured signs respectively supplied from a plurality of individual electrodes **150a** to **150f** and a reference sign supplied from a reference electrode **150e**. The reference/measured sign selection unit **171** supplies one measured, which is sign sequentially selected from among the measured signs supplied from the plurality of individual electrodes **150a** to **150f**, and the reference sign supplied from the reference electrode **150e** to a non-inverting input terminal a and an inverting terminal b of the differential amplification unit **172** under control of the control unit **200**.

The differential amplification unit **172** differentially amplifies the measured sign supplied to the non-inverting input terminal a and the reference sign supplied to the inverting input terminal b.

The filtering unit **173** filters the differentially amplified sign supplied from the differential amplification unit **172**, thereby removing power noise or movement noise.

The A/D conversion unit **174** converts the filtered sign supplied from the filtering unit **173** into a digital sign and then supplies the digital sign to the control unit **200**.

The gain adjustment unit **176** adjusts a gain amplified by the differential amplification unit **172** under control of the control unit **200**. The control unit **200** transfers the sign to the gain adjustment unit **176** so as to differentially adjust the gain according to the magnitude of the sign received from the A/D conversion unit **174** and to apply the proper gain according to the magnitude of a given vital sign.

The frequency band adjustment unit **175** adjusts the frequency band filtered by the filtering unit **173** under control of the control unit **200**. The control unit **200** adjusts the frequency band to be filtered according to the type of the vital sign being measured. For example, in case of an EMG, the frequency band may be adjusted to 50 Hz-500 Hz, and in case of an EEG, the frequency band may be adjusted to 10 Hz-10,000 Hz. The reason for adjustment of the frequency band is to filter the sign band which is proper to be processed.

The input unit **180** receives vital sign measurement instructions from a user and then transfers the vital sign measurement instructions to the control unit **200**.

The sensor unit **190** includes a pressure sensor to measure pressure of the electrodes **150** of the hands **131R** and **131L** applied to the skin or a speed sensor, such as a tachometer to calculate joint angles of manipulators. The control unit **200** calculates absolute coordinates of the respective joints from the calculated joint angles of the respective joints of the vital sign measurement robot **100**. When the absolute coordinates of the respective joints are calculated, absolute positions of the respective joints and an absolute position of the vital sign measurement robot **100** are obtained.

When the control unit **200** receives the vital sign measurement instructions from the input unit **180**, the control unit **200** receives a position of the vital sign measurement robot **100**, a position of a person, and a measurement portion of the body of the person, from the image recognition unit **160**.

When the control unit **200** receives the above predetermined data from the image recognition unit **160**, the control unit **200** controls the drive unit **220** such that the electrodes of the hand(s) **131R** and/or **131L** are located at the measurement portion of the body of the person. The control unit **200** drives joints of the arms and the legs having plural degrees of freedom, thereby locating the electrodes **150** at the measurement portion of the body of the person.

After the electrodes **150** are located at the measurement portion of the body of the person, the control unit **200** may control the electrodes **150** to be pressed onto the measurement portion of the body of the person, at a predetermined pressure according to pressure data received through the pressure sensor. The control unit **200** locates the electrodes **150** at the measurement portion of the body of the person, while gradually increasing pressure applied to the measurement portion of the body of the person, and, upon confirming that the predetermined pressure is applied to the measurement portion of the body of the person, stops movement of the electrodes **150**.

Alternatively, after the electrodes **150** are located at the measurement portion of the body of the person, the control unit **200** may control the electrodes **150** so as to be pressed onto the measurement portion of the body of the person, at a predetermined pressure through impedance control. The control unit **200** adjusts stiffness of finger tips through impedance control, thereby allowing the electrodes **150** to be precisely located on the skin of the person. Impedance control is a control method to overcome the limitations in position control having large stiffness (K ; a stiffness coefficient in impedance characteristics) and to properly adjust stiffness so as to apply proper force to the fingers at which the electrodes **150** are located, and various stiffnesses may be applied between a target position and an actual position of the finger tip. Korean Patent Laid-open Publication No. 2010-0062653 discloses a finger control method of a robot using impedance control in detail.

When the electrodes **150** are precisely located at the measurement portion of the body of the person, through the above-described methods, the control unit **200** receives various vital signs measured by the vital sign measurement unit **170** through the electrodes **150** contacting the skin of the person. The control unit **200** analyzes the received vital signs, and displays a result of analysis through the display unit **230**.

The database **210** stores positions of portions of the person, where vital signs are to be measured, according to types of the vital signs. For example, a portion of the person, where an EMG is to be measured, may be set to the wrist of the person, and a portion of the person, where an EEG is to be measured, may be the head of the person.

The drive unit **220** drives the joints under control of the control unit **200**.

The display unit **230** displays vital signs to the outside such that a user may see the vital signs. The display unit **230** may provide a message or an alarm representing the result of analysis to the outside.

FIG. 9 is a flow chart illustrating a control method of a vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment.

The control unit **200** detects whether or not a user issues vital sign measurement instructions (operation **300**), and detects a distance between the vital sign measurement robot **100** and a person, vital signs of whom are to be measured, and

a measurement portion of the body of the person, upon detecting that the user has issued the vital sign measurement instructions (operation **310**).

The distance between the vital sign measurement robot **100** and the person is detected through the image recognition unit **160**, such as a stereo vision system or a laser. The image recognition unit **160** is configured to detect a three-dimensional shape of the person as well as to sense relative positions of the vital sign measurement robot **100** and the person. Further, the vital sign measurement robot **100** obtains joint angles of respective joints using a speed sensor, such as a tachometer, and calculates relative positions of the respective joints of the vital sign measurement robot **100** and the person by comparing absolute positions of the respective joints and an absolute position of the person, when the absolute positions of the joints are calculated from the respective joint angles.

The position of the vital sign measurement robot **100** means positions of the respective joints and hands of the vital sign measurement robot **100**.

The measurement portion of the body of the person, the vital signs of whom are to be measured, is obtained by recognizing the three-dimensional shape of the person and then selecting corresponding data stored in advance in the database **210**.

When the position of the vital sign measurement robot **100**, the position of the person and the measurement portion of the body of the person are detected, the control unit **200** drives the manipulators so as to locate the electrodes **150** at the measurement portion of the body of the person (operation **320**).

The control unit **200** controls the electrodes **150** so as to be pressed onto the measurement portion of the body of the person at a predetermined pressure. The pressing of the electrodes **150** onto the measurement portion of the body of the person is achieved using the above-described pressure sensor or through impedance control (operation **330**).

The vital sign measurement unit **170** measures a vital sign, when the electrodes **150** are pressed onto the measurement portion of the body of the person at the predetermined pressure (operation **340**).

The control unit **200** analyzes the vital sign transferred from the vital sign measurement unit **170**, displays data, obtained through analysis, to the outside, and stores the data in the database (operation **350**).

As is apparent from the above description, a vital sign measurement robot in accordance with an embodiment moves electrodes provided on hands to a person, vital signs of whom are to be measured, thereby measuring vital signs of the person.

The embodiments can be implemented in computing hardware and/or software, such as (in a non-limiting example) any computer that can store, retrieve, process and/or output data and/or communicate with other computers. For example, the control unit **200** in FIG. 6 can include a computer to perform calculations and/or operations described herein. A program/software implementing the embodiments may be recorded on non-transitory computer-readable media comprising computer-readable recording media. Examples of the computer-readable recording media include a magnetic recording apparatus, an optical disk, a magneto-optical disk, and/or a semiconductor memory (for example, RAM, ROM, etc.). Examples of the magnetic recording apparatus include a hard disk device (HDD), a flexible disk (FD), and a magnetic tape (MT). Examples of the optical disk include a DVD (Digital Versatile Disc), a DVD-RAM, a CD-ROM (Compact Disc-Read Only Memory), and a CD-R (Recordable)/RW.

Therefore, in an embodiment, a robot hand has an electrode thereon. A computer detects a measurement portion of a body of a person having a vital sign to be measured, controls the robot hand so that the electrode is moved to thereby be located on the detected measurement portion of the body, and measures the vital sign via the electrode located at the measurement portion of the body.

Moreover, in an embodiment, a vital sign measurement robot includes an input unit to receive a vital sign measurement instruction; an image recognition unit to detect a distance between the vital sign measurement robot and a person having a vital sign to be measured, and a measurement portion of the body of the person, when the vital sign measurement instruction is received; a control unit to control a hand of the vital sign measurement robot to move an electrode provided on the hand so as to locate the electrode at the measurement portion of the body of the person, when the distance between the vital sign measurement robot and the person and the measurement portion of the body of the person are detected; and a vital sign measurement unit to measure the vital sign via the electrode, when the electrode is located at the measurement portion of the body of the person.

Although a few embodiments have been shown and described, it would be appreciated by those skilled in the art that changes may be made in these embodiments without departing from the principles and spirit of the invention, the scope of which is defined in the claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A vital sign measurement robot comprising:

an input unit configured to receive a vital sign measurement instruction;

an image recognition unit configured to detect a three-dimensional shape of a body of a person having a vital sign to be measured, to detect a distance between the vital sign measurement robot and the person, and to detect a measurement portion of the body of the person from the detected three-dimensional shape, when the vital sign measurement instruction is received;

a control unit configured to control a hand of the vital sign measurement robot to move an electrode provided on the hand so as to locate the electrode at the measurement portion of the body of the person, in accordance with the distance between the vital sign measurement robot and the person and the measurement portion of the body of the person detected by the image recognition unit; and

a vital sign measurement unit configured to measure the vital sign via the electrode, when the electrode is located at the measurement portion of the body of the person.

2. The vital sign measurement robot according to claim 1, further comprising:

a pressure sensor configured to measure pressure applied by the electrode to the measurement portion of the body of the person,

wherein, when the electrode is located at the measurement portion of the body of the person, the control unit controls the hand to cause the electrode to be pressed onto the measurement portion of the body of the person at a predetermined pressure according to data transferred from the pressure sensor.

3. The vital sign measurement robot according to claim 1, wherein, when the electrode is located at the measurement portion of the body of the person, the control unit controls the hand to cause the electrode to be pressed onto the measurement portion of the body of the person at a predetermined pressure through impedance control.

4. The vital sign measurement robot according to claim 1, further comprising:

a tachometer configured to measure absolute positions of respective joints of the vital sign measurement robot, wherein

the tachometer senses joint angles of the joints and transfers the joint angles to the control unit, and the control unit calculates absolute coordinates of the respective joints from the joint angles and controls the hand in accordance with the calculated absolute coordinates.

5. The vital sign measurement robot according to claim 1, further comprising:

a display unit,

wherein, the control unit receives data regarding the vital sign from the vital sign measurement unit, and outputs the received data through the display unit.

6. An apparatus comprising:

a robot hand having an electrode thereon; and

a computer configured for

detecting a three-dimensional shape of a body of a person having a vital sign to be measured,

detecting a measurement portion of the body of the person from the detected three-dimensional shape, controlling the robot hand so that the electrode is moved to thereby be located on the detected measurement portion of the body, and

measuring the vital sign via the electrode located at the measurement portion of the body.

7. An apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising: a sensor configured for sensing pressure applied by the electrode to the body,

wherein the computer controls the hand to control the applied pressure.

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